

# Sports

## Sauer competes in Enduro World Series in Aspen

**Jason McMillen**  
IVN Contributing Writer

Gary Sauer, a member of a prominent family in the area, recently raced in the 6th round of the Enduro World Series in Aspen, Colorado July 29 after being picked via lottery back in January. He raced in the master's 40 class and finished 35th out of 50 in his age group; an impressive feat considering he's only been mountain biking for four years. Sauer said that the race featured the most intense trails he's ever ridden.

In addition to world-class difficulty, the event took place at around 12,000 feet of elevation—high enough to make the race even more physically demanding with the relative scarcity of oxygen and potential altitude sickness. "It was hardcore," Sauer said, adding that the race was over 30 miles long. At home, the highest trail that is easily accessible to him is around 7,000 feet. To get used to the elevation prior to the race, he left town a week early to practice.

While he was there, aspirin was part of his daily routine because it has been proven to help with certain side effects and dangers from a sudden increase in altitude coupled with vigorous exercise. Staying hydrated was also a focus of his routine because, at high elevation, the body expends water at a faster pace than usual.

Sauer picked up mountain biking after

successfully being 30 days clean off of methamphetamine. After having taken his bike out a few times he decided to volunteer to help out a race in Ashland to check out the scene, the people and to generally see what it was all about. Soon thereafter, he got an email back from the race holders asking if he would like to participate in the beginner's race if given a free ticket. Sauer accepted without hesitation, camped out and got second place. Although he was already very much into mountain biking the moment he bought a bike and took it out for the first time, he fell in love with it after the race.

"It saved my life; that's the way I look at it," Sauer admitted, inferring that it has taken the place of his former drug habit. Currently, his equipment is sponsored by Unreal Cycles, a business out of Central Point. His next race is on Aug. 26 in Bend, Oregon.

To support and encourage others in the community to pick up the sport, Sauer is working toward cleaning up the old trails around Page Mountain Snow Park; trails that were first blazed by Jim Heern, a former coach at Illinois Valley High School. So far, Sauer, Heern, Sam Greenwood and the Forest Service have all volunteered to clean up the trails. "Mountain biking is super fun and I think that it could grow in the community of Cave Junction. The population's growing around here. There's got to be some activities for the town," Sauer said. However, at this time, there is no

firm schedule or deadline for the clean-up.

To further engage the community, Sauer has created a Facebook page in an attempt to organize group rides that aim

to accommodate people of all skill levels. Those who wish to join or inquire can find the page by searching for CJ DIRT Mountain Bikers.



(Courtesy photo for The Illinois Valley News)

Gary Sauer tackled a 30 mile race at 12,000 feet elevation in Aspen.

## I.V. Little League wraps up season with girls competing at state

**Jason McMillen**  
IVN Contributing Writer

The Illinois Valley Little League wrapped up their season last month with the honor of sending the junior girls' softball team to the state competition but, despite this triumph, they continue to suffer from rampant theft of equipment and a shortage of volunteer umpires. Unfortunately, the team did not place but showed great skill and prowess simply by making it that far. The same group of girls, this year in eighth and ninth grade, also made it to state last year.

First and foremost, Shelly Davis, board president, said that the league's equipment shed is being broken into on a somewhat regular basis and, because of it, some of the gear necessary for the children to play ball

has been repeatedly hauled away. However, the league quickly learned not to put anything of value in the shed because of the crime's frequency. Most recently, in January, the suspects gained entry by cutting a hole in the wall, presumably because it was easier than gaining entry through the locked door. Davis reported that most of the crime perpetrated against the Little League happens in the offseason.

The most fiscally damaging theft so far included a quad that was stolen a couple seasons ago. Although it was later returned to the league by a community member who recognized and repossessed it, the vehicle had been totaled. After a television news story was aired on the subject, a kind patron replaced it with a donation.

Perhaps the most aggravating instance of criminal activity in Davis' recent memory

was the senseless destruction of the league's then new score board. "All these years we've never had a score board," Davis said, "We got to use it for a couple of games and when they broke in they just beat it up. They didn't take it or sell it or anything." Without fail, every time the shed has been broken into the burglars have stolen the league's first aid supplies. Davis has no theory as to why that item is of interest to them.

Not limiting themselves to breaking down walls, stealing the Little League's equipment and acts of senseless destruction, the thieves also make it a regular habit to steal banners, shade cloth and, once, even an American flag. "They take everything. It's ridiculous," Davis said, further adding that she's perplexed as to what the stolen banners could possibly be being used for. Every time the league has installed shade cloth above the

dugouts, it's cut down and stolen in a matter of days. Davis estimated that banners and shade cloth are stolen at least a half a dozen times every season.

The shortage of umpires is theorized to be the result of the general decline in volunteerism seen across the United States and that the frequency of rude and unruly game goers who heckle their decisions have steadily increased over the years.

The Illinois Valley Little League organizes some 150 children aged four to 18 into 10 teams with an average of two to three coaches per team. They begin practicing in April for their first game in June and the season ends, for the players, in July. In the adult league, there are 10 teams with 12 to 15 players on each team and their season goes until the end of August.

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